Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 10564 140932Z
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AS-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 OMB-01 /070 W
----------048791 141041Z /16
R 140859Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9360
INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU
COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 10564

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, JA
SUBJECT: JSP LEADERSHIP RESIGNS

REF: TOKYO 10425

SUMMARY. ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY FOR JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY'S POOR SHOWING IN UPPER HOUSE ELECTION, CHAIRMAN NARITA AND SECGEN ISHIBASHI RESIGNED JULY 13. THEIR DEPARTURES OPENED UP PROSPECT OF LONG, BITTER POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN PARTY'S POWERFUL HARDCORE MARXIST FACTION ON LEFT AND MODERATE FACTIONS ON RIGHT. END SUMMARY.

1. IN WAKE OF JSP'S SETBACK ON UPPER HOUSE ELECTION, WHERE IT WON ONLY 27 SEATS FOR LOSS OF FIVE, PARTY CHAIRMAN NARITA AND SECGEN ISHIBASHI ANNOUNCED THEY WOULD TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR "DEFEAT" AND RESIGN. PARTY CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACCEPTED
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PAGE 02 TOKYO 10564 140932Z

RESIGNATIONS AT EMERGENCY MEETING JULY 13. COMMITTEE MUST NOW DECIDE HOW AND WHEN TO SELECT REPLACEMENTS, SUBJECT THAT HAS ALREADY SET OFF STRUGGLE BETWEEN PARTY'S RIVAL LEFT AND RIGHT WINGS.

2. LEFT WING, LED BY PRO-MOSCOW, ORTHODOX MARXISTS OF SOCIALISM ASSOCIATION (SA), WANTS REPLACEMENTS ELECTED BY PROMPT EXTRA-

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

ORDINARY CONVENTION, WHERE THEY WOULD HAVE MAJORITY OF DELEGATES. RIGHT WING, LED BY NEW CURRENT SOCIETY AND EDA FACTION, IS ANXIOUS TO AVOID CONVENTION DOMINATED BY SA. THEY WANT CONVENTION TO TAKE PLACE AFTER PARTY HAS UNDERGONE (SO FAR UNSPECIFIED) REFORMS AND HAS SELECTED NEW CONVENTION DELEGATES, SOMETIME IN SEPTEMBER AT EARLIEST. CHAIRMAN MAKIEDA OF SOHYO, JSP'S LABOR SUPPORT BASE, FEARFUL THAT ANTAGONISM MIGHT DAMAGE PARTY UNITY, HAS BEEN URGING CONCILIATION, SO FAR WITHOUT SUCCESS. BATTLE LINES ARE DRAWN AS EACH SIDE TRIES TO PROMOTE CONVENTION ADVAN-TAGEIOUS TO ITS CANDIDATE FOR CHAIRMAN.

3. LEFT-WING CANDIDATE IS TARAO TAKAZAWA, MEMBER OF SA AND PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN. HE IS PERSONALLY POPULAR THROUGHOUT PARTY BUT HIS HARDCORE LEFTIST IDEOLOGY IS UNACCEPTABLE TO RIGHT. RIGHT-WING CANDIDATE IS HIDEO DEN, FORMER NEWSCASTER, WHO IS EXTREMELY POPULAR NATIONALLY BUT NON-IDEOLOGICAL RELATIVE NEWCOMER TO POLITICAS UNACCEPTABLE TO LEFT. THIRD CANDIDATE IS ICHIRO ASUKATA, MAYOR OF YOKOHAMA, WO APPEARS ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES. IN EARLIER CAREER AS DIETMAN, HE WAS ALIGNED WITH LEFT BUT, SINCE BECOMING MAYOR SIX YEARS AGO, HE HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY MODERATE.

4. IN JULY 13 MEETING WITH EMBOFF, ASUKATA SAID HE PERSONALLY FELT CANDIDATES OF BOTH RIGHT AND LEFT WINGS, DEN AND TAKAZAWA, WOULD REMAIN UNACCEPTABLE TO OPPONENTS. EVEN CUSTOMARY JAPANESE COMPROMISE SOLUTION, WHEREBY DEN BECAME CHAIRMAN AND TAKAZAWA CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TOKYO 10564 140932Z

SECGEN WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE, HE THOUGHT. ALTHOUGH JSP HAD REACHED SUCH SOLUTIONS IN PAST, IT COULD NOT DO SO NOW BECAUSE HARDCORE LEFT WOULD NO LONGER MAKE COMPROMISES. ASUKATA PRO-FESSED HE HIMSELF WAS UNWILLING TO BECOME CHAIRMAN AND ACCORD-INGLY SPECULATED NARITA AND ISHIBASHI MIGHT EVENTUALLY BE ASKED TO STAY ON. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, HE PLANNED TO BE OUT OF COUNTRY FOR SEVERAL WEEKS BUT WAS PREPARED TO CUT TRIP SHORT IF PARTY CALLED.

5. THUS, ASUKATA SAID, JSP APPEARED IN FOR LONG LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE. HE SAID FOCUS OF STRUGGLE WOULD BE OT SO MUCH IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES PER SE BUT FIGHT BETWEEN PRO-SOVIET AND PRO-CHINA FACTIONS. HE SAID STRUGGLE WOULD PROBABLY NOT LEAD TO PARTY SPLIT AND MIGHT, BY HELPING CLEAR AIR, MAKE REFORM EASIER.

6. COMMENT. WE AGREE WITH ASUKATA THAT DRAWN-OUT BITTER BATTLE INVOLVING NOT ONLY JSP RIGHT AND LEFT WINGS, BUT SOHYO LABOR LEADERSHIP AS WELL IS LIKELY. MOREOVER, DESPITE JSP REVERSES, WE DO NOT RULE OUT POSSIBILITY OF NARITA AND ISHIBASHI REMAINING. MANSFIELD

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

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22 May 2009
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